

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. at the Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Sawyer, student body president, and Eduardo Padron, president, Miami-Dade Community College; and Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida.

Statement on Signing War Crimes Disclosure Legislation

October 22, 1996

I have signed into law H.R. 1281, the "War Crimes Disclosure Act." This Act, sponsored by Representative Maloney of New York, urges United States Government agencies to make public any records concerning individuals alleged to have committed Nazi war crimes.

My Administration is committed to ensuring the widest possible disclosure of government documents. On April 17, 1995, I signed Executive Order 12958, which will make available certain previously classified national security documents while safeguarding information critical to our Nation's security. Additionally, my Administration worked closely with the Congress on the recent passage of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act. I believe that our democratic principles require that the American people be informed of the activities of their government.

Over half a century has passed since the conclusion of World War II and the end of the Holocaust, one of the most horrifying periods of genocide in world history. I strongly believe in the central finding of this Act, that it is important to learn all we can about this terrible era so that we can prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again. To that end, the Act calls for more comprehensive disclosure of documents specific to Nazi war crimes. It is clearly in our public interest to learn any remaining secrets about the Holocaust.

I'm pleased that the Act recognizes the need not to disclose material that is still important to U.S. national security and law enforcement interests. I am hopeful that the Congress and the executive branch will continue to work together to balance the public interests of disclosing government records

with the national interests of keeping certain documents protected.

Ensuring a full accounting of United States records on Nazi war criminals is an important step in preserving the memory of those who died and honoring the sacrifices of those who survived. I was pleased to sign this bill into law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 22, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 1281, approved October 19, was assigned Public Law No. 104-309.

Statement on Expansion of Homeownership

October 22, 1996

Owning a home is central to the American dream. So it is good news for all our families that today's report shows that homeownership rates are at a 15-year high.

Strong job growth, low interest rates, and rising incomes have made this expansion in homeownership possible. With the lowest combined unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates in 28 years, 4.5 million more American families over the past 4 years have been able to realize their dreams and buy a home. In fact, this has been the longest, steadiest expansion of homeownership in three decades.

My administration has worked hard to help more Americans own their own home. By cutting the deficit 60 percent, we helped drive interest rates down. We have cut FHA closing costs for first-time homebuyers and cut the time for an FHA loan approval from 2 months to 2 days. And Secretary Cisneros' "National Partners in Homeownership" initiative has helped broaden and deepen the ranks of homeownership.

Now we must do more to help hard-working American families to buy their own home. My balanced budget plan would keep interest rates from rising. It would allow families to save tax-free in an IRA for the purchase of a first home, and enable all Americans to sell their homes without paying any capital gains taxes.